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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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### **UNITED STATES SUPPORTS FINANCIAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN AZERBAIJAN**

Azerbaijan SME Support *through* Financial Sector Development Project, supported by the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by ACDI/VOCA will start the implementation of its Rural Finance Training Program for Banks and Leasing Companies **at the Azerbaijan Bank Training Center (35, Azerbaijan Avenue) on Tuesday, August 8-11, 2006 at 9 a.m.**

The program will help the financial sector professionals understand the unique aspects of rural enterprises and agricultural producers and processors. The training will enable the participants to understand the special challenges associated with rural and agricultural finance related to the micro, small and medium entrepreneurs. The participants will also develop an understanding of new and innovative lending approaches for agriculture and rural areas and become familiar with alternate ways of offering rural finance services.

Ms. Elena Nelson, Senior Rural Finance Specialist at ACDI/VOCA, USA will lead the four-day training at Azerbaijan Bank Training Center (ABTC) and she will work with Rauf Agayev, ABTC senior trainer. Ms. Nelson has 30 years of experience in commercial and microfinance institution development, much of it devoted to training. The training will also help ABTC to build their capacity to provide follow up training.

The USAID-supported project builds the financial institutions' capacity to finance SMEs. The project also works to improve legal and regulatory environment for the financial sector in Azerbaijan.

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